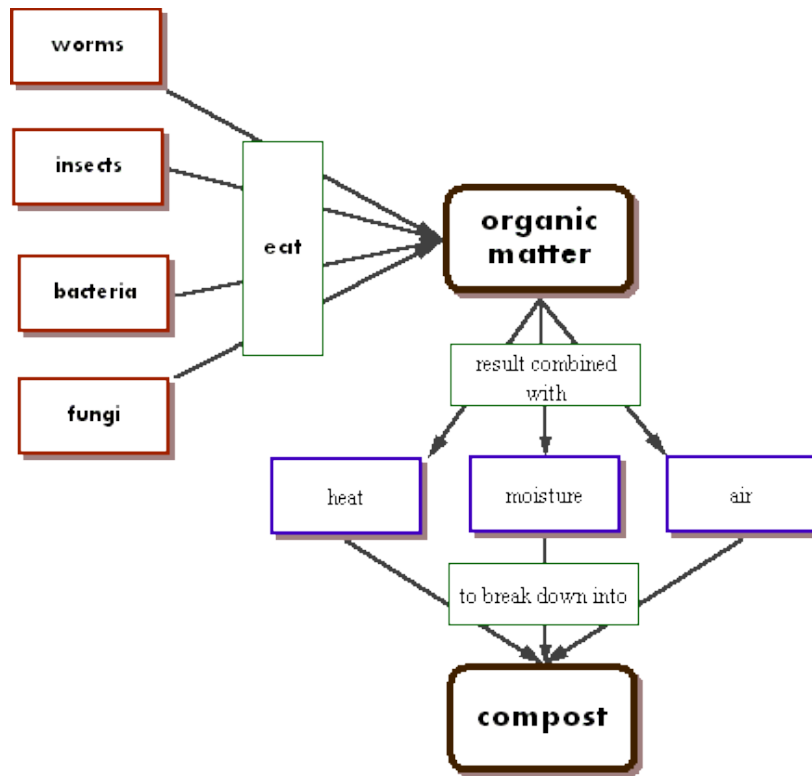


## The Role of Worms in Composting



Compost is made up of decayed organic material and is a very good fertilizer for plants. Worms are often used to produce compost using a process called vermicomposting. This type of composting uses red worms to break down household food waste and can be done either indoors or outdoors. Red worms are used instead of the common earthworm, because the common earthworm prefers garden soil over compost.

Vermicomposting is an easy way to allow people to recycle some of their household waste. When worms eat certain types of waste, they excrete the water that was in the waste, as well as castings. Over time, this produces a mineral-rich compost mixture that can be used on plants. You can vermicompost all kinds of household waste, including vegetable scraps, coffee grounds (including the filter), tea leaves, vacuum cleaner debris, eggs and even soaked newspaper and pizza cartons. You can't compost all of your household waste. For example, the worms do not like meat, dairy products, plastics or metals.

Adapted from: <http://www.northerngardener.org/classes/kids-programs/worms-and-compost>

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Reflections:

1. How does having earthworms make compost help people?

2. What might be some problems with using earthworms for composting?

Adapted from: <http://www.northerngardener.org/classes/kids-programs/worms-and-compost>

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